PAINTING WITH JULIO CABOS





Learn to paint figures with one of the world's foremost figure painters

INDEX



Andrea Color
Basic blue
Bleu de base
Azul básico
NAC-26
Andrea Color
Flat white
Blanc mat
Blanco mate
NAC-01
Andrea Color
Napoleonicgreen
Vert napoleonien
Verde napoleónico
NAC-10
Andrea Color
Light yellow
Jaune clair
Amarillo claro
NAC-40
Andrea Color
Light purple
Pourpre clair
Púrpura claro
NAC-32
Andrea Color
Napoleonic blue
Bleu napoléonien
Azul napoleónico
NAC-16

1. USING THE ACRYLICS

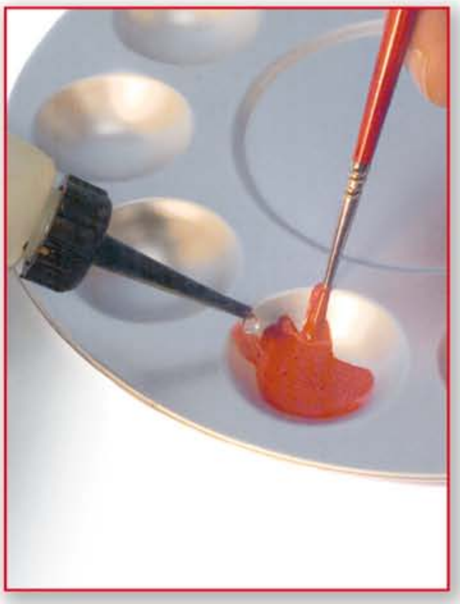
Most figure painters today use acrylic colours for painting their miniature figures.
As with any activity, the correct use of this medium depends on first mastering some basic concepts.
Usually, the acrylic pigments tend to sink to the bottom of the container when stored over a long period, so the first thing to do before using them is to shake the bottle well.
Once you obtain a uniform colour, squeeze a few drops onto the palette and add some water until you get a milky consistency. If you want to make a colour mixture, simply add the various colours and more water and mix them until you get the shade you are seeking. There are a number of different brands of acrylics and all are similar in composition so they can be mixed together with no problem.
Keep in mind that when applying acrylics with a brush keep it fully charged with paint so that with each pass paint is added to the figure. Also, the most important part of the brush is the tip, which has to be fine and always maintained in perfect condition.
If there is too much paint on the brush, this can be easily removed by passing it a couple of times on an old towel or cloth. Always carry out a few tests on, for example, a sheet of paper before applying paint to the figure.



Shake the paint container



Pouring the paint



Adding water



Mixing



Loading the brush with paint



Cleaning the paint from the brush



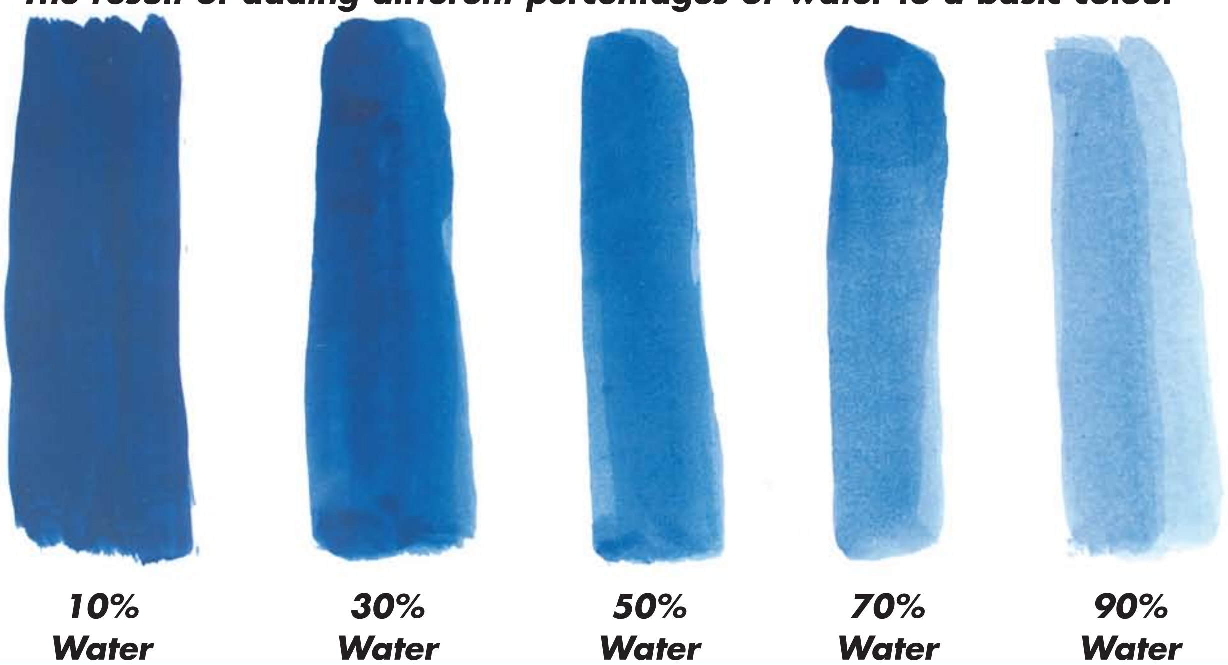
Types of brush strokes

There are three basic problems to overcome when painting with acrylics: paste coats, colour ridges and brightness.
The pasted effect occurs when the paint is applied too thick; to solve the problem, just add water until you get the right consistency. It's better to apply two or three thin coats rather than ruin the job by allowing the brush strokes to get out of control.
Ridges are the result of too much paint or water in the mixture; using less paint and/or water in the mixture solves this.
If the end result is too bright or has a glossy sheen, the answer is to add some matte medium to the mixture or give the completed figure a coat of matt varnish.



Applying paint on the figure using a brush.

The result of adding different percentages of water to a basic colour



2. BEFORE PAINTING

Preparing a miniature

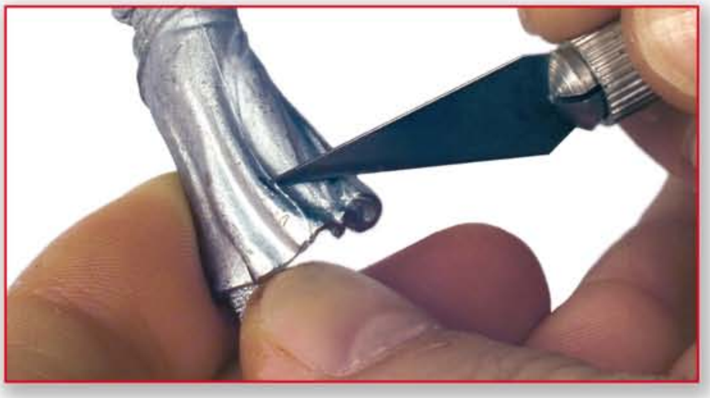
All figures, whether made of metal, plastic, resin, vinyl, or any other material, will have small flaws that have to be corrected; these include mould lines, metal or plastic flashing, channel marks, air bubbles, etc.
Once any flaws on the figure have been removed or filled, wash it in soap and water to remove any oils left by the mould release agent. These oils, if not removed, will adversely affect the primer.

Priming

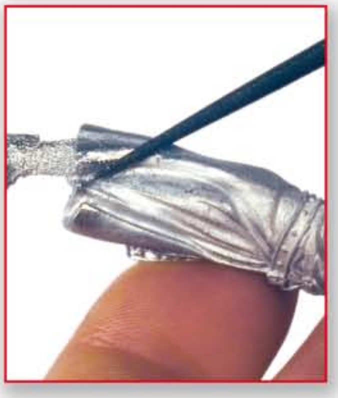
This is the final preparation phase before painting can begin and is essential because primer ensures that paint will adhere to the figure. You can apply primer with an airbrush, a spray can, or a paintbrush, although it is recommended to use one of the first two techniques. If you do not have the necessary materials, enamel paint diluted with thinner can be used applied in several thin coats.
Try to use at least two or three diluted coats instead of trying to cover the surface with a single coat.

Choosing the lighting angle

Before painting a figure, you must first decide where you want the light to come from. There are a number of different lighting techniques, such as zenithal (the figure is lit from directly overhead) or general (the light comes from different angles and sources).
So, to discover how your chosen lighting scheme will apply to the highlights and shadows, first place the figure under a light bulb in the chosen position. The light will then show you where to position the highlights and shadows.



Eliminating the mould lines.



Filing the mould lines.



Sandpapering.



Spray Priming



General lighting



Zenithal lighting



Lateral lighting

3. BRUSH PAINTING BASICS FOR MINIATURES

I will now show you how to work on the figure using some of the paint sets available from Andrea. Each set has been carefully designed to avoid troublesome mixtures when painting the base, highlights or shadows. One important advantage -especially for beginners- of using these sets is that you do not have to worry about any special mixture drying on the palette before you have finished using it or retrieving an original mixed shade that has dried before painting has been completed.
Skilled painters can use these innovative paint sets as a basis for developing new shades, thus personalizing the final result according to one's taste.

Painting the eyes

Of course, there is no rule that says you must paint the eyes first. However, it is true that painting eyes is usually one of the most difficult stages when beginning to paint figures. In any case, it is quite clear that eyes are not easy, and if a mistake is made it is always easier to paint them again rather than the whole face.
The most suitable brush is a No: 0 or No: 1, the sharper the point the better, and made of Kolinsky sable in every case.

01. Palette with colour base XNAC-02, matt black and XNAC-60 airbrush medium.

02. Mix the diluted paint with a little of the medium. This will avoid the paint drying on the brush tip and allow you to draw accurate outline strokes.

03. The upper eyelid is outlined, painting it with a KS-0 brush and carefully following the model's shape.

04. XNAC-11 Navy blue is used to paint pupils and it is also mixed with the medium. Begin with a tiny spot that can then be rounded off and correctly sized by careful, small strokes with the tip of the brush.

**Grenadier, 1st Red Life Battalion "Lange Kerls" (C. 1720)
Andrea Miniatures. Code: SG-F136
Metal. 54 mm**



Spray Priming









Painting the face
(ACS-01 Flesh Paint Set)

This set is supplied with two flesh tones (light and dark) to coincide with the choice of highlights and shadows. By using this assortment, many different mixtures can be obtained according to requirements without the need to closely follow the shades prescribed in the leaflet for every case.







05. ***Base colour of a 50:50% mixture of base colours Nos: 1+2. Apply two or three coats, allowing each coat to dry before applying the next to achieve an even finish.***





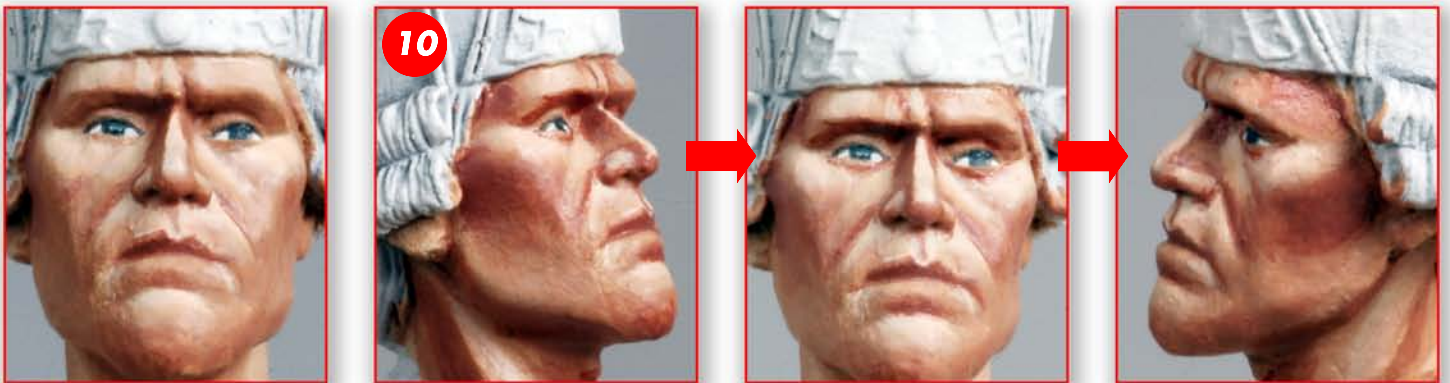
06. ***First highlight by adding No: 3 to the base colour mixture. The face is painted according to an overhead lighting scheme, looking for those areas of maximum light.***

07. ***Second highlight shade just using No: 3. The more lightened areas are treated gradually by accentuating them using the same shade applied in successive thin coats just like in prior stages.***

08. ***Third highlight using a mixture of Nos: 3 and 4. In this final phase, just mark those points receiving maximum light.***

9. ***First shadows by mixing the base colour with No: 6. Just as with the first highlights, start by working on the broad, general shadow areas.***

10. ***With the second shadows, enhance and define some of the areas just treated: particularly the eye sockets, the base of the nostrils, chin and, a little softer, the cheekbones. The mixture used here is obtained by adding more No: 6 to the second shadow.***



Painting a white cloth (ACS-02 White Paint Set)
Next, is a step-by-step example of how to paint white cloth. The White Paint Set has been designed to produce warm whites. In this example, the colours will be used in the sequence they are presented in the box, beginning with the base, followed by the three highlights and then the two shadows.



11. Base colour No: 1 applied over a matt white primer will give a brighter finish than painting over a grey primer.



12. Next, the first highlight using No: 2, this works to settle a first, general approach to the highlights, leaving finer details on creases and folds for a further stage.



13. Second highlights, No: 3, apply several coats and concentrate on the tiny creases and those areas receiving more light in accordance with overhead lighting.



14. Third highlight, No: 4, this shade is pure white and can be used straight from the bottle or mixed with No: 3, thus leaving the pure white for an extra, final highlight touch.



15. The first shadow can be painted using No: 5 directly from the bottle or mixed with the base colour if looking for a subtler gradation.



16. The final shadow, No: 6, is applied only in the deepest creases or those less exposed to overhead lighting.





Painting a red cloth (ACS-04 Red Paint Set)

The method here is quite similar to that used when using the white set with gradations produced using successive mixtures of either new and previous colours or straight from the bottle as explained in the leaflet included in the box.





17. The base colour of three thin coats of paint.

18. The first highlight using No: 2 that can be used straight from the bottle.

19. The second highlight, No: 3, enhances the fine creases.

20. The third highlight, No: 4, is primarily used on small creases and folds as well as on small details such as eyelets, edges etc.

21. The first shadow is painted as explained earlier.

22. The final shadows, using No. 6, is for outlining the different elements of the garment and to enhance some areas in natural shadow, such as the insides of the trousers and coat.















Painting a blue fabric (ACS-05 Blue Paint Set)

Blue, unlike the previous colours, is one of those shades that can be regarded as a little more complicated when applying highlights and shadows. These Paint Sets are perfect for mixing with any other colours and many combinations can be obtained according to requirements or taste.

23. ***Begin by painting the base colour No: 1 applying two or three coats.***

24. ***The first highlight using No: 2 that can be applied without mixing it with the base colour. Two layers were applied in each case.***

25. ***Second highlight using No: 3 and following the same method as used in all previous processes.***

26. ***Third highlight No: 4, this last highlight colour is thought to give a higher contrast between the highlights and shadows, but can omitted for the sake of a smoother finish.***

27. ***First shadow colour using No: 5. The first coats will cover some transitional points between the base colour and the highlights. The creases that receive less overhead lightening can be treated later.***

28. ***Second shadow using No: 6, this shade is quite dark and very good for adding depth in the final shadows.***















4. BASIC AIRBRUSHING

The airbrush is a very useful tool for painting groundwork, large models or bigger figures. However, by following some simple rules and using the correct materials, it can also be used to paint smaller figures with astonishing results in a surprisingly short time.

Tools and materials

There are a huge variety of airbrushes according to operating systems and purposes: simple or double action, detachable or fixed cup. My advice is to use a double action airbrush with fixed cup and a 0.4mm nozzle.

The compressor is also very important in ensuring a quality finish. As with airbrushes, there are a number of different types available, but two necessary key features are an air reserve tank and a manometer that is used to select the correct air pressure (normally between 1.5 - 2 bars) as a continuous airflow supply.

Other complementary materials when airbrushing include adhesive masking sheets and masking fluids (Maskol or latex).

Other useful instruments are a steel rule and some tweezers to move pieces of masking on the piece.

How to use the airbrush on a figure.

Just like painting with ordinary brushes, careful planning to determine the order in which the different parts must be painted is essential to guarantee a good result. Obviously, this order of work will vary according to the particular figure to be painted. However, in general, comparatively larger parts or areas (capes, overcoats, trousers, etc) should be painted first.

When painting the different elements, it should first be decided which parts will be easier to mask or conceal once they are painted to avoid -as much as possible- the laborious and delicate process of making and positioning masking patterns.

The method I use is to apply thin coats -a sort of light shadowing- while keeping the primer white for the highlights.

The first coats should be airbrushed at a short distance (3 - 5 cm) from the piece, attempting to place most of the paint at the bottom of creases and folds and partially faded on the background cloth. If a stronger highlight is wanted, then the method is to airbrush just on the upper, protruding areas using short, accurate passes. The shadows can then be enhanced on the deeper areas at the end by giving them an extra pass with the airbrush. The paint will just naturally flow from the nozzle to the bottom of creases.



PAINTING PROCESS

Starship Captain
Andrea Miniatures. Code: : SG-F129. Metal. 54 mm

01. Priming by airbrushing the figure with white.

02. Cutting and fitting the adhesive tape on the figure's upper half.

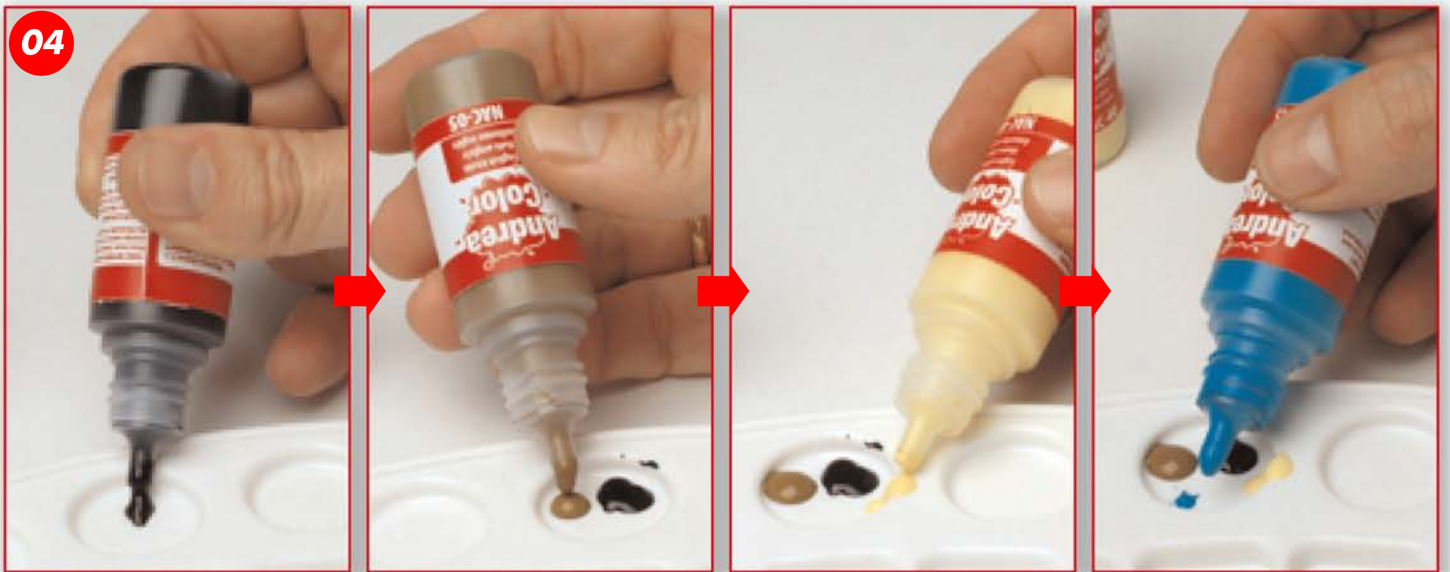
03. Colours from the new acrylic XNAC range that are suitable for both ordinary brushes and airbrushes.

04. The trousers are given a coat of a base colour made up of the following mixture: XNAC-02 matt black + XNAC-05 English uniform+ XNAC-40 light yellow + XNAC-16 Napoleonic blue3









05. ***Progressively add drops of water drops until the constancy of a milk shake is obtained.***

06. ***A 40% water + 60% Gunze Sangyo solvent are mixed in the airbrush cup.***

07. ***Using a synthetic brush, add paint to the cup and stir it until you get a milky consistency.***

08. ***Deeper areas (the bottom of the creases) are now treated with a more saturated shade while maintaining a subtle gradation on the intermediate areas and leaving the primer colour visible on the light peaks.***


05




06


07


08







9. ***When painting the highlights on the crease peaks, accurate control of the airbrush should be practiced to assure that the nozzle is placed at the correct angle.***



10. ***Turn the figure upside down for final shadowing, thus enhancing the effect of overhead lighting.***



11. ***The masking is now removed now and the highlights and shadows touched up with a sharp pointed brush.***

12. ***The trousers are masked off up to the pullover and then proceed to paint them in the same way.***

13. ***The highlights are applied from above, thus reinforcing the maximum light points.***

14. ***Last, repeat this but with the piece upside down to apply shades just on maximum shadow points.***







15. Once all masking has been removed the final result can be appreciated. The next step is to enhance some of the small creases and folds with a brush.

16. The smaller, final details, such as the hands, face and boots are painted in the traditional way.

17. The completed figure







5. ADVANCED AIRBRUSHING

In the previous exercise, I revealed how to use the airbrush to paint clothes using short, saturated passes that do not require a great skill level. It only requires a good control of the paint flow, the distance and spraying angle.

Before accepting the challenge of painting this new figure, it is first advisable to carry out some free hand exercises, such as painting a number of vertical and horizontal strokes by moving the hand from right to left or up to down while maintaining the same thickness throughout the line. To achieve this, the trick is to maintain the same air pressure, paint flow and distance to the piece. By practicing this, it will help you to gain a better control and skill with your airbrush.

Also, do not forget the importance of accurately cutting and fitting masking to obtain a good final result.

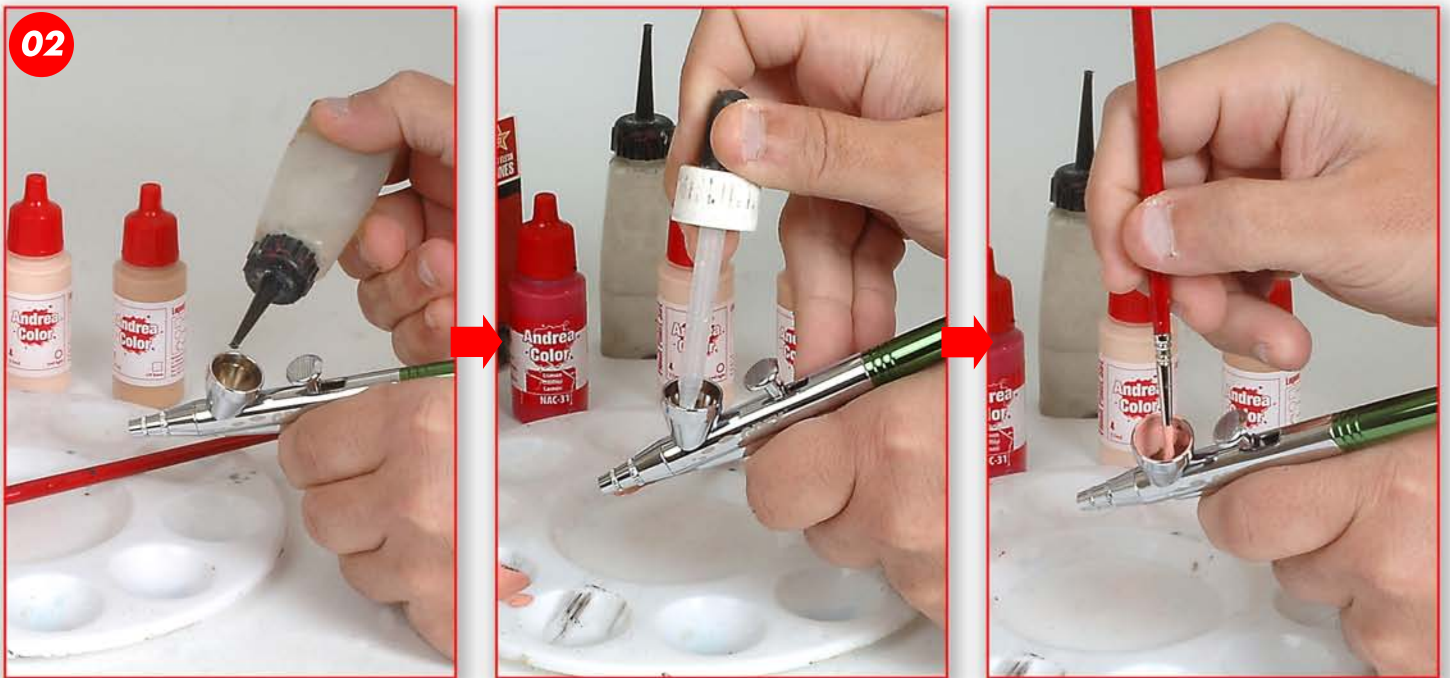
HOW TO PAINT A PIN UP

Dusting Away
Andrea Miniatures
Code: PIN UP-08. - Metal. 80 mm

01. The flesh colour is prepared. In this case I have used a mixture of ACS-01: No: 1 + No: 4 (Flesh Paint Set) + XNAC-43 light flesh + XNAC-31 crimson. The paint consistency should be like a milkshake.

02. A mixture of 40% water and 60% solvent is poured into the cup. The paint mixture is then added until it has a milky consistency.







***03.** Now, check that the airbrush sprays clean and even on a piece of paper. If some small spots appear it may be because the paint is too thick, so add some more water and solvent. If the paint mixture is too runny, more paint should be added.*

***04.** The spray pattern should be very smooth and transparent enough so that the primer can be seen on those points of maximum light. This is extremely important, as, during this painting operation, only the shadows will be treated.*







***05.** As the work is carried out with a highly diluted mixture, several coats will be required to attain the correct colour saturation.*



***06.** Add a little No: 6 from the ACS-01 for the first shadow tone.*

***07.** Use this tone and concentrate on those different areas more affected by shadows. The spray must closely follow the shape of the area to be painted. For example, if it is the leg the hand holding the airbrush must be moved vertically.*





08. ***A new mixture, this time No: 2 and No: 6 from ACS-01, is prepared to paint the second shadow tone***

09. ***Continue with the shadowing process, making the figure's subtle forms more and more evident. When applying the first shadow tone, the paint should cover the bottom of the creases without reaching those points of maximum light. This second shadow will enhance the colour transitions.***

10. ***Items used for painting stockings and their transparency.***

11. ***Almost half of the cup is filled with solvent.***

12. ***A different tone of flat black is used to modify the black tone used before (XNAC-02). Part of the dress will also be painted in black. By using different paint brands we can get a variety of finishes on the garments.***

13. ***Once two or three loads of paint have been added with a brush, check that the transparency is right by spraying to on a piece of paper.***











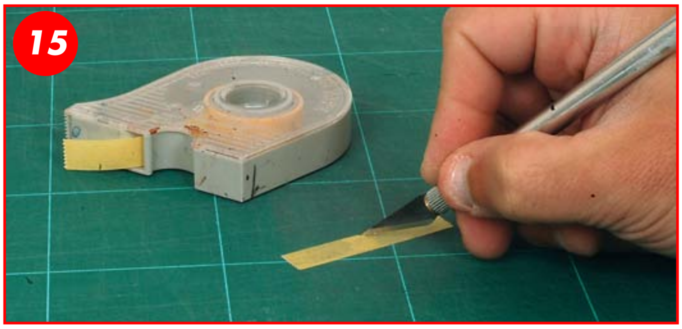


14. ***Begin by airbrushing the entire piece with a thin, even coat. Next, concentrate on the muscle forms that were painted earlier with flesh tones.***

15. ***Tiny bits of adhesive tape are used for masking patterns.***



14



15

16. ***Masking is removed with tweezers and then adjusted to very carefully follow the shape of the stocking.***

17. ***Paint using the same mixture and technique as that for the legs.***

18. ***Make a new mask to paint the smooth transparency of the knickers.***

19. ***The painting process is similar to that of the stockings.***

20. ***Concentrate the shadows only over the less transparent areas.***



16



17



18



19



20

***21.** To paint the dress use the N° 5 tone from the Black Paint Set (ACS-02) and only apply the colour in deepest areas of the creases.*



***22.** Due to the figure's position and the zenital lighting scheme, shadows on the front of the figure are more intenses than on the rear, so the shadows must be increased on this side.*

***23.** Paint the final shades using N° 6 from ACS-02.*

***24.** Once the painting process is completed remove the masking tape. Now the finish obtained by good masking can be seen as well as the superior result of painting this type of figure with an airbrush.*













25. ***Most of the work is concentrated on the face. The palette is prepared with all the colours used in earlier mixtures in separate cells. When brush painting, the paint consistency required is different than when using the airbrush and the paint should only be diluted with water.***

26. ***Here intermediate tones play an important role when obtaining credible make-up effects. Once the touching-in has been done with a brush on the highlights, shadows and intermediate tones, tiny details such as the lips, eyes and eyebrows are completed.***

27. ***The eyes are painted with matt black XNAC-02 + airbrush medium XNAC-60. The medium is used to make the work easier when painting the pupils as the paint takes a longer time to dry.***

28. ***Paint is poured into the different sockets.***

29. ***Black paint is diluted with just water.***

30. ***Paint and medium are mixed together to get the correct consistency before painting the eyes.***















31. Details of the painted eyes. Special attention was given to the direction of the girl's gaze.



32. The completed figure.

32





MY WAY!



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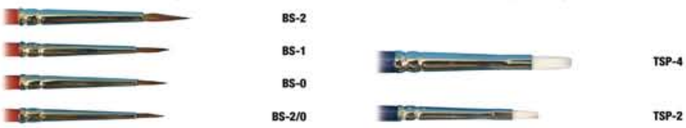
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400 ml
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Cyanoacrylate medium viscosity glue



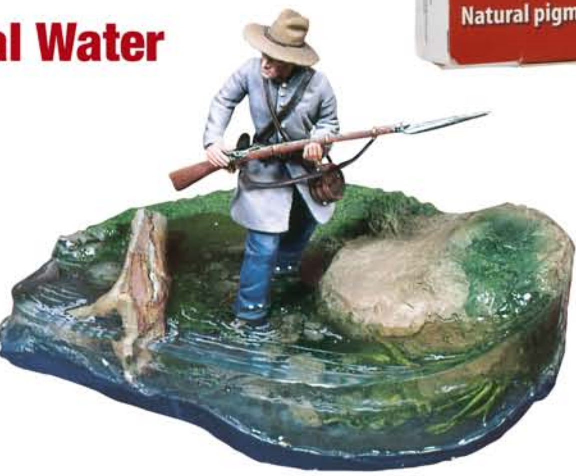
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